



MIKIMOTO

THE ORIGINATOR OF CULTURED PEARLS SINCE 1893

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The Ama Divers once played an essential role in the cultivation of our pearls. Diving down, these women would collect pearl oysters from the depths of the sea bed and then return them once the nucleation process had been performed.

Today, as our techniques have evolved, the Ama are no longer required. However, on Mikimoto Pearl Island, a dedicated museum where Kokichi Mikimoto created the first cultured pearl, the Ama still demonstrate their skills and bring to life their important contribution to pearl farming.

As a young man Kokichi Mikimoto was captivated by the charm of pearls. The first son in a family who ran a noodle restaurant, he was to dedicate his life to creating and perfecting the world's first cultured pearl. Today, the company that bears his name stands as a testament to the success of his endeavour, creating unique gems that would please even Kokichi's perfectionist eye.

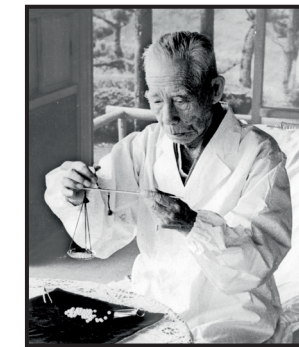
On July 11, 1893, after enormous efforts of research and experimentation, Mikimoto would see his dream become reality. Mikimoto's wife, Ume, hauled a basket of oysters from the sea for inspection. Nestled within the folds of an oyster, a gleaming object caught her eye. A pearl!

Mikimoto had discovered the secret to cultivating beautiful pearls of such quality that they rivalled nature's own. In 1896, Mikimoto was granted his first patent for semi - spherical cultured pearls.

In the decades to come, Mikimoto continued to pioneer the science of pearl cultivation. Every challenge was met with greater innovation. The stunning South Sea pearl was one of the most spectacular of these advancements.

KOKICHI MIKIMOTO

the alchemist of the sea



Here Mikimoto was to overcome raging seas and harness the warm waters of Okinawa to create remarkable large black pearls, 10mm in diameter.

In 1899 he opened his first pearl boutique in Ginza, Tokyo's most fashionable shopping district. As word spread of the stunning gems on show, Mikimoto's cultured pearls rapidly gained favour with Japan's elite. Before too long, demand from overseas markets saw Mikimoto stores appear in London, Paris and other major cities.

An ambassador of cultured pearls, Mikimoto personified Japan's reputation for attention to detail and helped build the country's global trade. He received many honours during his life including an appointment to the House of Peers by Imperial Decree. Upon his death at the age of 96, Mikimoto was awarded the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Sacred Treasure posthumously. Having built one of the greatest names in luxury jewellery, Mikimoto's legacy continues to inspire the company to adorn the world's most elegant women with beautiful pearls.





7



Rhapsody



Classic Akoya



9



Eden



Briolette



World of Creativity



Floral Bouquet



Morning Dew





Opulence



THE MIKIMOTO GUIDE TO CHOOSING YOUR PEARLS

Cultured pearls come in a range of qualities. Only the best pearls in the world are destined to become Mikimoto gems.

Qualities of pearls

As the Originator of Cultured Pearls, Mikimoto maintains the strictest quality-grading standards. Each pearl harvested is unique. Here are the four factors we use to assess quality:

Lustre

A rich lustre is one of the important elements that determine the quality of a pearl. The smoothness of the surface, the evenness of the nacre layer, and the content of impurities are all distinguishing factors.

Surface

Surface is the thickness of the nacre. The thicker the nacre, the higher the quality of the pearl.

Shape

Generally, the closer to a true sphere, the higher the quality of the pearl. However, non-spherical pearls have an inherent appeal that many people prize in a piece of jewellery.

Flaws

Flaws naturally arise in the course of a pearl's formation, but the fewer the flaws, the better the quality.

Colour

Pearls vary widely in colour based on the type of oyster that produces them. The rarer the shade, the more valuable the pearl. Colours range from cream, pink and grey to black, green and blue. White and pink rosé are among the most popular Akoya colours; peacock green and gold are among the rarest South Sea shades. Whilst colour choice is a matter of personal preference, always look for rich colour, evenly distributed throughout the pearl.

Size

While size does not affect the quality of cultured pearls, it does affect the price. Large pearls are more difficult to cultivate as oysters often reject the large implanted nucleus. Their rarity makes them more valuable. Pearls are measured in diameter increments of millimetres (mm). The classic Akoya pearl generally ranges from 3mm to 10mm. South Sea pearls begin at around 8mm and can grow as large as 18mm.

Types of Pearls

The wonderful variety in pearl types adds a further dimension to their appeal. These gems of the sea differ widely in their lustre and colour depending on the type of oyster in which they have grown. Here is a guide to the beautiful range of appearances:

Akoya Cultured Pearls

Prized for their brilliant lustre and rich colour, Akoya pearls are a traditional symbol of elegance and beauty. Produced by Japan's Akoya oysters, they have been a favoured pearl for many years. Depending on the size of the mother oyster, they grow from approx 3-10mm. Colours range from white, cream and pink to silver.

Black South Sea Cultured Pearls

These breathtaking, naturally black pearls are produced by black-lipped oysters in waters off Tahiti. They start at 8mm in size and can be round, oval, teardrop or baroque in shape. Though classed as black, the rich, dark colours actually range from slate grey, silver and peacock green to rosé or blue.

South Sea White Cultured Pearls

The magnificent, satin-like lustre of these fantastic white pearls comes from the silver-lipped South Sea oyster. Their opalescent appearance subtly changes under light, making them a constant marvel to behold. Harvested in sizes from approx 9mm, their shapes range from round, oval or teardrop to free-form baroque.

South Sea Golden Cultured Pearls

These opulent pearls are produced by the golden-lipped oyster. Their warm, natural golden colour is said to be equivalent to gold itself. The colour palette ranges from light champagne to a very rare, deep gold. This oyster species can also produce highly luminescent white pearls, but the deeper golden colours are the most coveted of all pearls. Harvested in sizes from approx 9mm, they are available in round, oval, teardrop or beautiful baroque shapes.

Freshwater Cultured Pearls

Cultivated predominantly in the lakes and rivers of China, Freshwater pearls are cultured in a mussel rather than an oyster. Often small in size, several Freshwater pearls can be cultured in one mussel. Perfectly round Freshwater pearls are extremely rare.

Conch Pearls

These natural pearls are harvested from a large marine snail called the Queen Conch. Found in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico this snail is famous for its heavy and lustrous shell. Conch Pearls can be pink, yellow or brown. Pink (or a salmon-coloured orange-pink) is generally the most sought-after colour, while brown are relatively rare. The highest-quality examples of Conch pearls are characterized by a distinctive "flame structure" that gives the appearance of a fire burning on the surface.

THE HOUSE OF MIKIMOTO

Mikimoto is the foremost producer of the finest quality cultured pearls and a world leader in the design of exceptional jewellery. From the selection of the finest materials to expert workmanship and committed customer service, our name is synonymous with superior quality at every stage.

WHY MIKIMOTO?

For today's connoisseur of fine jewellery, Mikimoto combines timeless elegance with sophisticated, modern design. To own Mikimoto is a unique and luxurious pleasure. To wear Mikimoto is to reflect the purity of the ocean, the mystery of a pearl's creation and a miracle of nature enhanced by art.

For further information please visit www.mikimoto.co.uk





Diamond Tassel





Cascade



Dragonfly



Pavé Diamond and White South Sea



Starry Sky



Designed and crafted in Japan, the Mikimoto Debutante feather and pearl necklace is a 17 inch strand of A quality Akoya cultured pearls highlighted by a white gold pavé diamond ball. The 18k white gold feather clasp can be detached to wear as an individual pendant. The necklace can also be worn without the feather detail as a classic pearl strand. The set is comprised of A quality Akoya cultured Pearl stud earrings and is presented in a beautiful bespoke box.

Debutante Necklace Set 2011

The originator of cultured Pearls. Since 1893.

www.mikimoto.co.uk
www.mikimoto.com

TOKYO NEW YORK LONDON PARIS
BEIJING SHANGHAI HONG KONG

Some items are subject to prior sale. Some pieces are enlarged to show detail.
Diamond weights and pearl sizes may vary.
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